

Leah Sims and the long-lasting, positive influence that she has left on Southern Illinois.

CONGRATULATING "THE MONETT TIMES" AND "THE CASSVILLE DEMOCRAT" ON THEIR MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 2015

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of two publications in Missouri's Seventh Congressional District, which were honored with top awards at the Missouri Press Association's (MPA) annual convention this September.

"The Monett Times" was distinguished with the State-Wide General Excellence Award, while "The Cassville Democrat" brought home the MPA's Gold Cup—the association's highest honor. For both "The Monett Times" and "The Cassville Democrat"—who have been in circulation 116 and 144 years respectively—these top awards are believed to be the first that each community publication has won.

In addition to these top honors, these prestigious small-town newspapers' staffs and reporters took home a plethora of more than forty other awards, including a total of 13 first place honors, at the September 5th ceremony.

Mr. Speaker, this is a huge accomplishment all around for the Monett and Cassville communities in Southwest Missouri—whose citizens have been humbly and amply thanked by both "The Monett Times" and "The Cassville Democrat" for their support leading to their honors. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to these publications and their teams on their work, which makes me proud to serve the people in Missouri's Seventh Congressional District.

TRIBUTE TO THE BROWNLEE FAMILY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Brownlee Family of Macksburg, Iowa, for being selected to receive the Iowa Farm Environmental Leaders Award. Receiving this award was Glenda, Dan, Megan, Kevin, and Alex Brownlee.

Presented by the Governor, Lt. Governor, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources, this prestigious Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award is a joint effort to recognize the exceptional voluntary efforts of Iowa farmers to preserve and protect the environment of our state.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by the Brownlee Family is a commendable one. Their willingness to dedicate themselves to great stewardship of their land is an example that should be followed by all Iowans. I am proud to represent them and Iowans like them in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Rep-

resentatives will join me in congratulating the Brownlee's for their achievements and wish them nothing but continued success.

175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERKLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 2015

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the Berkley School District as it celebrates its 175th anniversary this year. The Berkley School District serves the cities of Berkley, Huntington Woods and the northern portion of Oak Park, all of which I have had the privilege of representing during my tenure in the House of Representatives.

The Berkley School District had its beginnings in 1840, only 3 years after Michigan attained statehood, in the Blackmon School, a one-room schoolhouse that was part of the Royal Oak Township School District #7. Berkley, like our nation, has changed dramatically in the last 175 years. What began as a one room school house in the area of Catalpa and Coolidge (Blackmon School) is now a comprehensive PreK-12 district including nine buildings and a commitment to personal excellence for all students. This commitment is evident in the achievement of Berkley School District students, whose high school graduation rate is 98%, with nearly 100% of graduates continuing their education at colleges and universities.

It is no surprise that Berkley School District students are so well-prepared for future success, as nearly 60% of its teachers have Masters degrees or higher, its high school students are offered more Advanced Placement courses than any other traditional high school campus in Oakland County, and the district is home to Norup Academy, the only K-8 International Baccalaureate program in the country which is housed on a single campus. Just a few weeks ago, Pattengill Elementary School was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2015, which helps to illustrate the district's commitment to excellence for the earliest learners as well as those preparing to graduate from high school.

As important as strong academics are to student success, the Berkley School District has helped students excel in music, the arts, and other extracurricular activities. Its orchestra, marching band and concert band have won numerous state honors, as has its capella, bell tone and concert choirs. Its students have had their artwork shown at national, state and local competitions. And students in the Berkley School District's co-curricular programs, including marketing, communications, literacy and poetry, and robotics have won honors at the state, local, and national levels.

The Berkley School District has long benefited from strong community support, which I know firsthand. My beloved late wife Vicki and I raised our children in Berkley, and all four of them attended the Berkley Schools. Indeed, it is fair to say that the roots of my career in public service were planted in our involvement in the district. Vicki joined the Berkley Council for Better Schools in 1959, an organization committed to maintaining excellence in the

schools. We hosted Council meetings in our house and made many lifelong friends through our involvement.

This community involvement, which has been so meaningful to me personally, continues today. Parents frequently volunteer for school activities, voters support millages to improve students' learning environment and to upgrade technology, and residents contribute to the Berkley Education Foundation, which supports classroom needs as well as the arts programs. In its 175th year, the district's success is rooted in support from the community; it is shepherded by the committed leadership of the Berkley School Board, Superintendent Dennis McDavid and his administrative team; and most importantly it has as its cornerstone the teachers and other education professionals who every day demonstrate their commitment to helping children achieve their fullest potential.

As the Berkley School District celebrates this significant milestone, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the students, staff, alumni and the entire community as they celebrate their rich history and continue their success.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN LONGMEADOW, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 2015

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to recognize the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, Massachusetts as they kick off a yearlong celebration for their 300th anniversary. The establishment of this Congregational church was pivotal in the founding of the town of Longmeadow in 1783 and the great community that flourishes to this day.

The origins of the First Church of Christ come from the Pilgrims and Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony fleeing England to escape religious persecution. After the settlement of Springfield, Massachusetts was founded in the 1630s on the banks of the Connecticut River, a group of families came together and created the neighborhood of "longmeddowe," as it was called at the time. At the time, the only church they could go to was First Church in Springfield, miles away from their homes. There were also a series of attacks on the settlers by local Native American tribes. Due to the hazardous journey, the families of Longmeadow decided in 1713 that they should have the right to build their own church in the safety of their neighborhood. During that period, the Massachusetts General Court needed to grant approval to form a parish. After Longmeadow's fourth appeal to the Massachusetts' colonial General Court, they were granted permission to create their own congregation. Since the church was the center of not only religious life, but also political life, Longmeadow was set on the path to become their own town.

The first meeting house was completed in March of 1716, where the town's Green is located today. Meetings and services were held there despite the walls taking 13 years to be plastered and without a stove or heating for 50 years. These meetings were a chance for people to have a voice in their community and